

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method of increasing a fraction of free carotenoids in a source of carotenoids in which at least some of the carotenoids are fatty acid esterified carotenoids is disclosed. The method is effected by contacting the source of carotenoids with an effective amount of an esterase under conditions effective in deesterifying the fatty acid esterified carotenoids, thereby increasing the fraction of free carotenoids in the source of carotenoids.